

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 AMMAN 0275

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11651: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, EG, JO, XF
SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING -- ASWAN VISIT

SUMMARY: KING REPORTS SADAT FIRMLY COMMITTED TO PEACE EFFORTS THIS YEAR. ASSAD WANTS JORDAN AND PLO TO COME TO A WRITTEN, CONCRETE AND FORMAL AGREEMENT ON A CONFEDERATION PRIOR TO RECONVENING GENEVA. SADAT'S STRATEGY IS TO DO ALL HE CAN PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY TO MAKE ISRAELIS FACE UP TO NEED FOR PEACE SETTLEMENT. KING IS CHARY ABOUT BECOMING SCAPEGOAT FOR CONCESSIONS TO ISRAEL AS PART OF SADAT'S CONFEDERATION SCHEME. HE BELIEVES PLO EVEN MORE RELUCTANT. HE IS KEEPING DOOR OPEN IN PRINCIPLE, BUT IS MOST WARY OF WHOLE PROCESS. KING SAYS SADAT PLANS TO RECEIVE PUBLICLY SOME LEADING ZIONISTS TO DISCUSS PEACE, TO BRING ASSAD WITH HIM ON VISIT TO KHARTOUM INCLUDE SUDAN IN THEIR NEW POLITICAL COMMAND AND TO TOUR GULF TOGETHER TO DRUM UP POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR IDEAS ON THE PEACE PROCESS. SADAT HOPES TO GET POSITIVE MOVES TO GENEVA BEFORE JUNE OR JULY. ASSAD, APPARENTLY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH SADAT, AGREES TO LET HIM TAKE THE LEAD BUT IS PREPARED HIMSELF TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST THIS APPROACH. KING SAID SADAT AND HE BOTH INSIST ON RETURN ALL

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OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, A POSITION WHICH SADAT CONFIDED TO HUSSEIN US HAS FULLY SUPPORTED. KING ADMITTED THAT JORDANIAN UNITY PROCESS WITH SYRIA HAS BEEN SLOWED DOWN BUT SAID ASSAD HAS NO OBJECTIONS. SADAT AND KING AGREED THAT BOTH SHOULD APPEAL TO US TO KEEP ISRAEL UNDER CONTROL IN SOUTH LEBANON. SADAT PLANS ARAB SUMMIT IN EARLY MARCH JUST PRIOR TO AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT MEETING IN CAIRO.

SADAT AND ASSAD WOULD HOPE TO SEE NEW PRESIDENT DURING HIS POSSIBLE TRIP TO EUROPE IN SPRING. EGYPTIANS INSIST ON SEPARATE REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA, BUT KING WITH SOME UNCERTAINTY CONCLUDES SADAT NOW UNDERSTANDS EGYPT CANNOT REALLY DO IT ALONE IN PEACE PROCESS.

1. I SAW KING AFTERNOON JANUARY 16 AND HE SPOKE WITH ME IN SOME DETAIL ABOUT HIS VISIT WITH PRESIDENT SADAT IN ASWAN.

2. HE PREFACED HIS REMARKS ON THE DETAILS OF THE VISIT BY TELLING ME HE WAS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED THAT SADAT WAS DETERMINED TO DO ALL POSSIBLE TO GET A PEACE SETTLEMENT. HE SAID SADAT WAS SEEKING IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE TO DO THIS. ON SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONING KING TOLD ME THAT SADAT LEFT HIM WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT EGYPT INDEED HAD VERY SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS TO FACE. KING ALSO SAID THAT SADAT'S FINANCIAL DILEMMAS, IN HIS JUDGMENT, EXTENDED ALSO TO HIS NEED FOR FUNDS TO SUPPORT HIS MILITARY. ALL OF THESE ALSO PROPELLED HIM TOWARD A PEACE SETTLEMENT.

3. KING THEN DESCRIBED FOR ME IN GENERAL TERMS THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT. SADAT HAD PUT VERY STRONG EMPHASIS ON HIS DESIRE TO HAVE JORDAN AND THE PLO COME TO A WRITTEN, CONCRETE AND FORMAL AGREEMENT PRIOR TO RECONVENING GENEVA OVER THEIR FUTURE RELATIONSHIP. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS, KING SAID THAT SADAT HAD NOT BEEN SPECIFIC
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ON THE DETAILS BUT DID INDICATE THAT THE AGREEMENT SHOULD WORK OUT A CONFEDERATION LEADING TO A FULL FEDERATION. THE KING NOTED THAT SADAT'S STRATEGY IS TO DO ALL POSSIBLE PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY TO PUT THE ISRAELIS INTO A CORNER ON THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE KING FELT THE EFFORTS TO MOVE HIM IN THE DIRECTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PALESTINIANS WAS ONE SUCH POINT. THEN, KING SAID, WE WOULD SEE WHO IN ISRAEL FAVORS AN AGREEMENT AND WHO IS AGAINST IT.

4. KING NOTED WITH RESPECT TO THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION THAT ASWAN MEETING HAD ENDED INCONCLUSIVELY. HE TOLD SADAT THAT AS ALWAYS HE WAS WILLING TO TRY TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION THAT WAS IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE WHOLE ARAB WORLD; ON THE OTHER HAND HE RESISTED STRONGLY AND VEHEMENTLY THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE WOULD BECOME THE SCAPEGOAT IN THE PROCESS. HE TOLD ME WITH SOME EMOTION THAT HE HAD BEEN IN THAT POSITION (SCAPEGOAT) BEFORE AND THAT HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING HE COULD TO AVOID BEING

PUSHED INTO THAT POSITION AGAIN. IN THIS CONNECTON
HE SAID THE PLO ITSELF WOULD POSSIBLY RESIST STRONGLY
EFFORTS TO PUSH IT INTO A CONFEDERATION WITH JORDAN. HE
EXPECTED SADAT'S EFFORTS THEREFORE TO RUN INTO DIFFICULTIES
FROM THAT QUARTER. ALSO HE WAS NOT OPPOSED TO DIS-
CUSSIONS WITH THE PLO, BUT WOULD PAY VERY CLOSE ATTEN-
TION TO THE DETAILS IN ORDER TO AVOID AS HE REPEATEDLY
TERMED IT "BECOMING A SCAPEGOAT". IN THIS CONNEC-
TION HE NOTED THAT WHILE HE HAD RAISED WITH SADAT THE
NEED TO BRING ABOUT SOME CHANGES IN THE PALESTINIAN
LEADERSHIP, SADAT HAD DODGED THE ISSUE AND HIS ANSWERS
WERE INCONCLUSIVE. THE KING SAYS HE FEELS THAT SADAT
WANTS HIM TO DEAL WITH ARAFAT AND THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP.
THE KING SAYD (GIVEN HIS WELL-KNOWN DISTASTE FOR ARAFAT) THAT
THIS MAKES HIM EVEN MORE DISTRUSTFUL OF SADAT'S EFFORTS
IN THIS AREA.

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TM THE KING REMARKED SOMEWHAT QUIZZICALLY TO ME THAT WHILE WHAT
SADAT WANTED TO WORK OUT WAS DIRECTLY CONTRARY TO WHAT WAS
SAID IN THE EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN JOINT COMMUNIQUE OF JANUARY 15,
SADAT POSED ABSOLUTELY NO OBJECTION TO THE COMMUNIQUE LANGUAGE ON
THESE POINTS WHICH HAD BEEN PROPOSED IN ITS ENTIRETY BY THE
JORDANIANS.

6. I ASKED THE KING ABOUT WHAT TIMING THEY HAD IN MIND FOR
THESE STEPS. HE SAID NO CONCLUSIVE DECISIONS HAD BEEN
REACHED, BUT FROM OTHER AREAS OF THE DISCUSSION HE KNEW
THAT SADAT WANTED HIM TO TRY TO WORK SOMETHING OUT
BEFORESUMMER. SADAT'S OWN DEADLINE FOR BEGINNING

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

GENEVA WAS JUNE OR JULY OR SOMETIME IN THAT GENERAL PERIOD.

7. I ASKED THE KING ABOUT ASSAD'S REACTION TO ALL OF THIS. THE KING SAID HE HAD TALKED WITH ASSAD BY PHONE THIS MORNING AND SAID ASSAD'S IDEAS GENERALLY PARALLELED THOSE OF SADAT. THE KING AGAIN INSISTED TO ASAD THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO BECOME A SCAPEGOAT IN THE QUESTION.

8. KING ALSO MADE A POINT OF TELLING ME THAT HE AND SADAT WOULD BOTH INSIST THAT ALL ARAB TERRITORY OCCUPIED IN 1967 BE RETURNED AS STATED IN THE PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE AND THAT THIS WAS THE BASIS FOR PROCEEDING TO A SETTLEMENT. SADAT HAD ALREADY SAID THE ISREALIS COULD HAVE PRACTICALLY ANY SET OF ARRANGEMENTS THEY WANTED IN EXCHANGE. THE KING LAMENTED TO ME THE FACT THAT IDEAS WHICH HE HAD ESPOUSED FOUR YEARS AGO WERE ONLY NOW BEGINNING, POSSIBLY MUCH TOO LATE, TO TAKE HOLD. THE KING ALSO SAID SADAT WAS INSISTENT THAT PRESIDENT NIXON AND YOU HAD COMMITTED YOURSELVES TO HIM ON THE FULL RETURN OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY. THE KING SAID SADAT HAD INSISTED TO HUSSEIN PRIVATELY THAT HE (SADAT) HAD ALWAYS MAINTAINED
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SILENCE ON THIS POINT AND WAS ONLY PASSING IT ON TO HUSSEIN NOW BECAUSE HUSSEIN WAS SUCH A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE US. FURTHER, SADAT ALSO, ACCORDING TO HUSSEIN, SAID THE US HAD PUSHED HIM (SADAT) HARD AND OFTEN IN THE DIRECTION OF WORKING OUT SOME WAY TO BRING JORDAN TOGETHER WITH THE PLO AND BACK INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS. SADAT WAS CAUSTIC AND BITTER IN HIS CRITICAL COMMENTS BOTH ABOUT THE RABAT DECISIONS AND THE CURRENT PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP. I POINTED OUT TO KING HERE THAT WE HAD ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT HE COULD AND SHOULD REALISTICALLY PLAY A ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND THAT RABAT MAY HAVE BEEN FINE RHETORIC BUT IT WAS NOT THE EPITOME OF REALITY.

9. IN DISCUSSING NEXT STEPS, HUSSEIN TOLE ME THAT SADAT PLANS SEVERAL BOLD PUBLIC MOVES. HE EXPECTS IN THE NEXT MONTH TO INVITE TO VISIT HIM OPENLY IN EGYPT A NUMBER OF WORLD JEWISH LEADERS INCLUDING NAHUM GOLDMAN, LORD SEIF, (?) AND OTHERS WITH A REPUTATION OF INTEREST IN

AND STRONG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. FURTHER, SADAT RECIEVED A STRONG PLEA FROM SUDAN WHILE HUSSEIN WAS THERE TO SET UP A TRIPARTITE HIGH POLITICAL COMMAND WITH SYRIA AND THAT COUNTRY. SADAT AND ASSAD NOW BOTH INTEND SOON TO VISIT KHARTOUM. THE PURPOSE WOULD BE THE CREATION OF LINKS WITH SUDAN SIMILAR TO THOSE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. THE SUDANESE ARE OBVIOUSLY FEELING PRESSURED BY LIBYA, LIBYA'S NEW RELATIONSHIP TO ETHIOPIA WHICH SEEMS TO BE MOVING IN AN ANTI-SUDAN PATTERN, AND BOKASSA AND HIS "EMPIRE" IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAL REPUBLIC. THE KING LAUGHED AND SAID HE WASN'T SURE WHETHER THE LATTER WOULD BE A LIABILITY OR AN ASSET TO LIBYA.

10. AFTER THE VISIT TO KHARTOUM, SADAT WOULD LIKE TO GET ASSAD TO JOIN HIM IN VISITING PENINSULA CAPITALS. THE IDEA WOULD BE TO EXPLAIN THEIR JOINT APPROACH TO A PEACE SETTLEMENT. SADAT SEEMS TO BE DISAPPOINTED ABOUT THE KIND OF BACKING HE HAS GOTTEN THUS FAR IN THE
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PROCESS FROM THE PENINSULA STATES. THE KING LED ME TO CONCLUDE THAT BOTH ASSAD AND SADAT WOULD PULL TOGETHER ON PUTTING PRESSURE ON THE PENINSULA STATES FOR FURTHER POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL BACKING FOR SYRIA AND EGYPT.

11. THE KING VOLUNTEERED THAT THE SYRIAN EGYPTIAN UNIFIED POLITICAL COMMAND DID NOT APPARENTLY AMOUNT TO VERY MUCH EXCEPT AN AGREEMENT ON CLOSE CONSULTATION. HOWEVER HE PUT GREAT STRESS ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAD DEVELOPED (OR POSSIBLY RE-EMERGED) IN THE PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN SADAT AND ASSAD. I ASKED THE KING WHETHER HE WOULD BE JOINING THE SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN POLITICAL COMMAND. HE SAID NO HE WOULD NOT, SUDAN WANTED TO DO THAT.

12. I ASKED ABOUT WHEN HE WOULD BE SEEING ASSAD AGAIN. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD BE DOING THAT SHORTLY, BUT HE WANTED TO MOVE A LITTLE FURTHER AHEAD IN THE WORKING LEVEL TALKS WHICH WERE TAKING PLACE BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA ON UNITY STEPS.

13. THE KING THEN SAID TO ME "YOU KNOW, WE HAVE SLOWED THAT PROCESS DOWN A GOOD BIT". I SAID I WAS NOT SURPRISED TO HEAR IT AS EVERYTHING I HAD SEEN HAD LED ME TO THE SAME CONCLUSION. HE DID SAY THAT THERE WOULD BE FURTHER MORE EXTENDED TALKS TAKING PLACE AT THE WORKING LEVEL TO DISCUSS WHAT UNITY STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA. HE HOPED THAT BEFORE GENEVA MET THERE WOULD BE SOME POSITIVE ARRANGEMENT EMERGING FROM THESE TALKS. I ASKED HIM IF ASSAD HAD INDICATED ANY REACTION TO THE SLOW DOWN

IN THE SYRI-JORDAN DISCUSSIONS. HE SAID NO, AND ADDED THAT HE
HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT ASSAD UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS GOING ON.

14. THE KING THEN RAISED WITH ME SOUTH LEBANON.
HE SAID THAT SADAT AND HE HAD BOTH AGREED SEPARATELY
TO APPROACH THE UNITED STATES TO ASK IT TO DO ALL IT
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COULD TO KEEP SOUTH LEBANON FROM BOILING OVER. IN
PARTICULARLY HE THOUGHT WE SHOULD KEEP IN CLOSE
TOUCH WITH THE ISRAELIS AND DO WHATEVER WE COULD TO
PREVENT THEM FROM AGGRAVATING THE SITUATION. HE
SAID ASSAD REALIZES FULL WELL WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF
HE DID OVEREXTEND HIMSELF IN SOUTH LEBANON AND IS
BEING MOST CAREFUL IN HIS HANDLING OF THE AREA.

15. ON RABAT SUMMIT PAYMENTS, THE KING TOLD ME
THAT HE HAD JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT THE CAIRO ARAB FOREIGN
MINISTERS CONFERENCE HAD AGREED TO DROP DEMANDS FOR
THE 1976 PAYMENTS IN RETURN FOR DONOR STATE
ASSURANCE THAT PAYMENTS FOR 1977 AND 1978 WOULD BE
FORTHCOMING AND THAT THE DONORS WOULD ALSO BE WILLING
AT A LATER TIME TO DISCUSS PAYMENTS FOR 1979.

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NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

16. THE KING SAID THAT IN EARLY MARCH SADAT WOULD

LIKE TO WIND UP THIS ROUND OF PEACE EFFORTS WITH A MEETING OF RELEVANT ARAB HEADS OF STATE JUST SLIGHTLY PRIOR TO A CAIRO ARAB AFRICAN SUMMIT. THE KING SAID HE WOULD PLAN TO ATTEND AND WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE COORDINATION OF PEACE EFFORTS. WHILE HE HAD NOT PRESSED TO JOIN THE EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN POLITICAL COMMAND, HE DID INDICATE TO ME THAT HE WISHED TO STAY IN CLOSEST TOUCH WITH THE PROCESS OF COORDINATION OF PEACE EFFORTS. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID THAT SADAT WOULD CONTINUE TO TAKE THE LEAD. ASSAD WAS MORE RELUCTANT TO LEAD AND GO PUBLIC, BUT NO LESS INTERESTED IN THE PROCESS. SADAT HAD TOLD THE KING OF HIS STRONG DESIRE TO BE IN TOUCH WITH THE NEW US LEADERSHIP. THE KING TOLD SADAT OF HIS PLANS TO VISIT THE US IN APRIL. SADAT IN TURN SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT HE AND ASSAD MIGHT BE ABLE TO MEET THE NEW PRESIDENT IN EUROPE. THE KING HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS SADAT AND PARTICULARLY ASSAD, HOPED THAT SUCH A MEETING WITH THE NEW PRESIDENT COULD TAKE PLACE IN EUROPE RATHER THAN IN THE UNITED STATES. THE KING URGED THAT WHAT-EVER POSSIBLE BE DONE TO FACILITATE SUCH A MEETING WHICH HE INDICATED HE BELIEVED WOULD BE MOST IMPORTANT FOR ALL OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED.

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QUM ON THE QUESTION OF REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA, THE KING SAID THE EGYPTIANS WANTED TO PRESERVE THE IDEA OF SEPARATE DELEGATIONS. THIS WOULD APPLY TO BOTH JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS. THE KING SAID FAHMY RAISED SUCH A LAMENT ABOUT HAVING TO GO TO GENEVA AND WORK IN ONE DELEGATION WITH "20 FOOLS" THAT HE WAS SURE THIS WAS AN AREA IN WHICH FAHMY'S INFLUENCE ON SADAT WAS QUITE STRONG. AS FOR THE MAKEUP OF GENEVA THE KING SAID THAT SADAT WISHED VERY MUCH TO HAVE THE CONFERENCE MOVE QUICKLY TO WORKING GROUPS. THE KING SAID THIS PROPOSAL HAS OF COURSE DONE NOTHING TO ALLAY IN HIS MIND THE FEAR THAT IN THE LONG RUN THE EGYPTIANS ARE STILL OUT FOR WHATEVER THEY CAN GET FOR THEMSELVES FROM THE PEACE PROCESS. HOWEVER, AFTER WE DISCUSSED IT FURTHER, THE KING SAID HE THINKS THAT SADAT IS NOT LIKELY TO WANT TO HAVE A REPETITION OF THE PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES WHICH BROKE OUT OVER SINAI II WHEN THE OTHER ARAB CONFRONTATION STATES FELT IGNORED AND ABANDONED AND AS A RESULT DID THEIR BEST TO MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR SADAT AND EGYPT. IN SUM, KING BELIEVES THERE IS GENUINE COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF SADAT FOR A PEACE SETTLEMENT ENCOMPASSING ALL OF THE AREAS NOW UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION.

18. COMMENT: THE KING IS RATHER UNEASY ABOUT BEGINNING ANY PROCESS OF DISCUSSION WITH THE PLO.

NEVERTHELESS HE CLEARLY DOES NOT WANT TO BE SINGLED OUT BY THE OTHER ARAB LEADERS AS THE RECALCITRANT PARTNER. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE PLO WILL HAVE SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES AGREEING TO THE COURSE OF ACTION WHICH SADAT HAS PROPOSED. FINALLY, THE KING APPEARED TO BE AS DUG IN AS I HAVE EVER SEEN HIM ON THE ISSUE OF NOT BECOMING A SCAPEGOAT. WHILE HE WAS NOT ABLE TO ARTICULATE FOR ME WHAT THAT MIGHT MEAN IN TERMS OF ANY FUTURE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PLO, HE CLEARLY DID NOT WANT TO BE THE ONE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TERRITORIAL AND
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OTHER CONCESSIONS MADE TO THE ISRAELIS ON BEHALF OF THE PALESTINIANS. IT IS OF COURSE NOT INCONCEIVABLE THAT SADAT'S IDEA OF SOME KIND OF WRITTEN AGREEMENT BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PLO COULD ALSO BE USED TO PROTECT THE KING AGAINST SUCH PROBLEMS BY SPECIFYING IN ADVANCE, WITH APPROPRIATE PLO SIGNATURES, THE KIND OF NEGOTIATING LATITUDE HE WOULD HAVE FOR WHATEVER FUTURE PEACE TALKS MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN WHICH HE WOULD BE A PARTICIPANT. I THINK IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE SEE MUCH MOVEMENT IN THIS (JORDAN-PLO) AREA, ALTHOUGH ASSAD TOLD HUSSEIN, ACCORDING TO THE LATTER, OVER THE TELEPHONE THIS MORNING THAT THE PLO (KHALID EL HASSAN) WAS ALREADY INDICATING THAT JORDAN AND THE PLO WERE IN TOUCH OVER THE MATTER. THE KING SAYS THIS IS NOT TRUE.

19. RECOMMEND DEPARTMENT PASS CAIRO AND DAMASCUS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FEDERATION, PALESTINIANS, POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, MEETING REPORTS, PEACE PLANS, MILITARY OCCUPIED AREAS, CAT-B, CHEROKEE 01/16/77
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 16-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977AMMAN00275
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P840072-0342
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770147/aaaabpjh.tel
Line Count: 420
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9adff2d8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3586283
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALK WITH KING -- ASWAN VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, PEPR, XF, EG, JO, IS, PLO, (HUSSEIN I), (SADAT, ANWAR), (ASAD, HAFIZ)
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9adff2d8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009